

January 24, 2001

To the KU Community:

I am pleased to accept the following “Strategic Plan 2000” which will serve as an important component of the KU Libraries' ongoing planning processes for the next two to three years. The Steering Committee is now officially discharged and the report will be submitted to Senate Library Committee for discussion.

The report represents significant investigation into and reflection upon the challenges and opportunities that the KU Libraries face as a research library in serving the students and faculty of KU and the larger scholarly community. I am deeply grateful to the members of the Steering Committee and the Task Forces, to Jim Neeley as the Steering Committee chair, and to all staff who participated in the planning process. This report will help to inform and guide our collective efforts. Just as important, the planning process itself has helped us to grow in our understanding of what we are and what we may become as a research library.

The Libraries' plan for collections and services will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs and circumstances of the University and the larger worlds of scholarship, technology, and publishing. Continuing dialog with the KU community to understand their needs, together with constant scanning of the environment in which we all work, is essential to our collective success, and we look forward to that conversation.

Julia M. Rholes  
Interim Dean of Libraries

---

## **University of Kansas Libraries Strategic Plan 2000**

### **Executive Summary**

During the summer of 2000, Keith Russell, Dean of Libraries, established a strategic planning initiative for the University of Kansas Libraries. This effort followed the previous plan, completed in 1993, and some initial planning begun but suspended during 1997. In recognition of the speed of change, the goal of the current process was to plan no more than three years into the future. The process was conceived to be streamlined, and the report brief. The Committee's charge was to “enunciate strategic directions rather than lay out a detailed, step-by-step plan.”

Following a period of reading and discussion among the Libraries' staff of current issues and trends in research libraries, and an examination of individual and organizational values, a retreat was held to formulate a new strategic vision for the Libraries. The statement that resulted reaffirms the Libraries' leading role as a scholarly information provider and proposes two primary manifestations of that vision: an Information Commons and an Information Portal. The planning process also reconfirmed the continuing relevancy of the Libraries' Mission Statement of 1993, which includes a list of all major operations and activities of the Libraries.

Feedback on the vision, from KU faculty, students, administrators, and many other Libraries' users, was sought in a variety of forums. A public web site was maintained at <http://www2.lib.ukans.edu/strategicplanning/>. Comments were shared with the Libraries staff by means of the Exchange public folders. A staff web site at

<http://www2.lib.ukans.edu/~staff/committees/strategicplanning/> provided both a news service for coming events and an archive of planning-related documents.

**Five Task Forces clarified the vision by investigating the key success factors of assessment, content, space, staff, and technology.** The resulting plan consists of three major Strategic Directions:

Strategic Direction #1: Create the Foundations to Achieve the Vision

- **Assessment**  
The Libraries must begin to develop what has been called “a culture of assessment:” an environment in which decisions are based on facts, research and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways which maximize positive outcomes and impacts for library users.
- **Content and Access to Content**  
A continual challenge for the Libraries will be the provision of high quality information resources, through both collection acquisitions and provision of pathways to external networks, within a fiscal environment in which purchasing power will never be adequate to provide all worthwhile resources.
- **Human Resource Development**  
The Libraries cannot be fully successful unless it places added emphasis on effective recruiting, training, development, retraining, and retention of quality staff.
- **Technological Infrastructure**  
Profound changes in the acquisition, management, preservation and delivery of information require the Libraries to take a leadership role in implementing improved systems campus-wide to organize, access, and disseminate information.

Strategic Direction #2: Develop the Information Commons

- One manifestation of the strategic vision is the Information Commons, the physical spaces within the Libraries where instructional, group, and individual learning endeavors can take place. This space should be equipped with the necessary infrastructure and equipment needed to provide for a wide range of learning opportunities with the goal of providing access to information in any format owned or accessed by the Libraries.

Strategic Direction #3: Develop the Information Portal

- A second manifestation of the vision is the Information Portal, a web-based infrastructure that provides a seamless way of navigating a complex, wide-ranging information universe. It provides: a gateway uniquely designed for the University community to search library, university, and web information resources of scholarly and research value; capabilities for interactive communication with colleagues and classes; and personalized views of key information resources.

The strategic vision and plan are intended to inform the Libraries’ resource allocation decisions for the next three years.

## A Strategic Vision for the University of Kansas Libraries

The following vision statement has been developed during the strategic planning process.

The University of Kansas Libraries will play a leading role in providing access to the full range of scholarly information resources necessary for learning and research at the University of Kansas. This role will include acquiring, organizing, disseminating, preserving, and contributing to the intellectual content of both printed and other traditional formats as well as digital sources of information. This role will also involve close collaboration with other units on campus, especially Information Technology and the developing KU Digital Library. Finally, the Libraries will take a leading role in local and national efforts to reform the scholarly communication system.

The manifestation of the vision is an

- **Information Commons**, the physical spaces within the Libraries where instructional, group, and individual learning endeavors can take place. This space should be equipped with the necessary infrastructure and equipment needed to provide for a wide range of learning opportunities with the goal of providing access to information in any format owned or accessed by the Libraries.

and also an

- **Information Portal**, a web-based infrastructure that provides a seamless way of navigating a complex, wide-ranging information universe. It provides: a gateway uniquely designed for the University community to search library, university, and web information resources of scholarly and research value; capabilities for interactive communication with colleagues and classes; and personalized views of key information resources.

The Libraries has developed this strategic vision for areas that will receive emphasis over the next three years. The vision does not encompass all day-to-day library operations. The Libraries' ongoing commitment to these activities is expressed in its Mission Statement.

(January 10, 2001)

## **KU Libraries Mission Statement (December 1993)**

The mission of the University of Kansas Libraries is to support the University's own mission as a center for learning, scholarship, and creative endeavor. The University's mission is achieved through high-quality undergraduate, professional, and graduate instruction sustained by outstanding libraries and information technology; high levels of research productivity; service to the state of Kansas, the nation, and the world through the preservation and dissemination of knowledge; international study and cooperative research; and a commitment to excellence, a multicultural environment, the dignity and rights of the individual, and to intellectual diversity, integrity and disciplined inquiry in the search for knowledge. [The University of Kansas Statement of Institutional Mission, December 1992 <http://www.urc.ukans.edu/Admin/About/KUmission.html>]

The Libraries fulfills its specific mission of supporting the academic programs and values of the University by selecting, acquiring and preserving outstanding collections of scholarly materials in appropriate media and formats which best fulfill the research needs of the University community; cataloging, organizing and making these collections readily available for the University, the state of Kansas, and the international scholarly community; providing responsive, high-quality reference, information, and instructional services; providing access to collections and information resources located elsewhere in the world; cooperating with other libraries and organizations within Kansas and beyond to ensure access to all scholarly information resources; and, providing a physical and intellectual environment conducive to learning, scholarship, and creative endeavor beyond the classroom and laboratory.

Source: *A Strategic Plan for the University of Kansas Libraries*, December 1993.

## Strategic Direction #1: Create the Foundations to Achieve the Vision

For the University of Kansas Libraries to serve as an information commons and an information portal, four foundations must be attended to: assessment, content and access to content, human resource development, and technological infrastructure. All of these are vital to achieving the vision. Because these are interrelated, prioritizing the foundations is impractical and they have been listed alphabetically.

Although they are often similar in name and reflect many of the same ideas as the five task force reports, the four directions below are not summaries of those reports and do not include all of their recommendations or priorities.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Like many other educational organizations, academic libraries face increasing pressure to demonstrate their value to students, faculty, administrators, legislators, accrediting bodies, parents, and others. Although libraries have long collected statistics on their collections and services, a more recent emphasis has been placed upon determining the value of library collections and services to users. Assessment initiatives should attempt to measure effectiveness within a specific context and thus should be informed by the mission and goals of the Libraries and the University of Kansas.

The Libraries must develop what has been called “a culture of assessment:” an environment in which more decisions are based on facts, research and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways which maximize positive outcomes and impacts for library clients.

- a) Establish a budget for assessment of staff training, collections, services and related areas, participation in Association of Research Libraries (ARL) projects, and support for departmental and program assessment initiatives.
- b) Appoint a standing group of staff to lead and coordinate assessment activities. One member of the group should act as a liaison to the Office of Institutional Research & Planning to ensure awareness of current University assessment activities. It is also essential that the group maintain regular communication with the library administration to ensure that recommendations and activities are aligned with current priorities and that they receive appropriate support.
- c) Appoint at least a half-time staff member to act as a resource person and coordinator of assessment activities.
- d) Determine what activities the Libraries can no longer continue to support. As appropriate, use assessment instruments in making this determination. At some point in the implementation of the Libraries’ Strategic Plan, it will be necessary to clearly articulate those activities that will be discontinued so that the Libraries can assure teamwork and successful implementation.

### **Strategic Direction #1: Assessment (continued)**

- e) Using a variety of assessment methodologies, ensure that the community's needs for information are being met and seek effective budgetary and operational solutions to address areas of weakness. For each academic program, create or update collection development and information access plans based on the assessments described above. These information access plans will address the current and anticipated roles of print collections, networked information, and document delivery/interlibrary sharing and seek greater integration of collections, services, and programs with the libraries at the Medical Center, the Law School, and the Edwards campus. The revised information access plans will be a primary management tool for collection decisions including budget, cataloging priorities, preservation, and off-site storage initiatives. Information access plans will be written by subject bibliographers after consultation with teaching faculty and library staff, reviewed by interdisciplinary teams, and revised as needed.
- f) Review uncataloged backlogs, identify those titles that should be added to the collection and catalog them. This review will be guided by up-to-date collection development and information access plans.
- g) Cultivate substantial assessment expertise, both internally through training of existing staff as well as through the development of partnerships with appropriate campus and professional organizations.

### **CONTENT AND ACCESS TO CONTENT**

A major commitment of the Libraries is the provision of high quality information resources and services in support of the teaching and research missions of the University. Emerging information technologies are driving many changes in higher education and will continue to have a profound impact on both library collections and scholarly communication. In recent years, the Libraries and its users have been operating in a mixed environment of print and digital information resources. An increasing number of new publications needed by the University community is in digital format and accessed by electronic networks; however, the promise of digitization is being impeded by an increasingly restrictive contractual and legislative environment, as well as new issues of preserving digitized materials. Furthermore, the transition to digital formats will vary by discipline; some will continue to be dependent on printed documents. Thus, locally owned collections in traditional formats will continue to be essential. Indeed, the Libraries, in consultation with the scholarly community, should identify those collections that are recognized nationally and internationally and provide adequate resources to expand and preserve them.

The Libraries' environment is a constantly changing one in which print and new technologies coexist. A continual challenge for the Libraries will be the provision of high quality information resources, through both collection acquisitions and provision of pathways to external networks, within a fiscal environment in which purchasing power will never be adequate to provide all worthwhile resources. For this reason, resource-sharing agreements among research libraries will become more important as the Libraries seek to assure that the body of scholarly literature (in all formats) is preserved and accessible for future generations. We reaffirm the Libraries' leadership role within the University in selecting, organizing, preserving, providing access to, and instructing in the effective use of information resources.

### **Strategic Direction #1: Content and Access to Content (continued)**

- a) Complete retrospective conversion of the cataloged collections currently represented only in the (paper) card catalog, in order of priority as determined by a review process. Priority may be influenced by the selection of materials to be transferred to the Book and Archival Record Depository (BARD).
- b) Review unique and special materials held by the Libraries, determine those that will be made available in digital format, and begin the digitization.
- c) Increase the volume of licenses negotiated and the speed with which they are processed while ensuring that license terms preserve fair use rights while fulfilling the Libraries and user needs.
- d) Strengthen cooperative and consortial relationships, nationally and locally, for coordinated collection development, effective interlibrary sharing, and joint licensing of electronic resources. Particular attention will be given to strengthening partnerships with the KU Medical Center libraries and the Law Library.
- e) Participate in the development of national standards for digital preservation in conjunction with the Kansas and KU Digital Library efforts.
- f) Identify those collections of highest quality and maintain them at this level. Commitment to collecting and preserving in recognized areas of strength contributes to strong overall library and university rankings and facilitates access for the KU community to library collections and services elsewhere in the world.
- g) The Libraries will take a more active role in the publishing and information markets, demonstrating leadership (through local actions and participation in national forums) in efforts to moderate costs and assure open and enduring access for scholarly information.

### **HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Providing effective information services in a user-driven and change-intensive environment requires a dynamic staff. The Libraries must have well-trained, appreciated, flexible, and user-focused staff. The provision of service must take into account the diversity of information resources, delivery methods, and research needs of the Libraries' users. The work of the Libraries and the skills required in this environment will be defined by profound changes in the way that the Libraries' users access and utilize information and the effectiveness of the Libraries' response to those changes. Thus, the Libraries' value as a service organization will be measured by how well its understanding of the changing information environment is integrated into the programs and skills offered in service to its constituency. Success is not ensured unless the Libraries places added emphasis on effective recruiting, training, development, retraining, and retention of quality staff. The following recommendations are based on the assumption that there will be a Staff Development/Training Officer to implement them.

### **Strategic Direction #1: Human Resource Development (continued)**

- a) Examine current staffing utilization and structures e.g., deployment and responsibilities of classified, student, unclassified professional, and library faculty. Identify current and projected staff skills and capabilities appropriate to meet the dynamic nature of the Libraries' services and make recommendations for necessary adjustments.
- b) Develop information that will serve as the basis for library-wide decision-making and planning regarding staffing numbers, responsibilities, skill requirements, and deployment most advantageous in accomplishing the service objectives.
- c) Develop an effective, relevant, and timely training and retraining program, reflecting diverse training methods, learning styles, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of the staff. Provide staff with the time for training, practicing and timely feedback, and effectively integrate and utilize service technologies based on user needs.
- d) Continually review and assess training and orientation goals, methods, and effectiveness, building upon existing understanding of training and orientation needs of all staff, including the needs assessment surveys done previously.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Profound changes in the acquisition, management, preservation and delivery of information require the Libraries to take a leadership role in implementing improved systems to organize, access, and disseminate information. As part of this leadership role, the Libraries will be a key player in KU Digital Library efforts. Critical to any future technological developments within the Libraries and the University is the need for increased bandwidth. The Libraries will take a strong advocacy role in persuading the University to place the highest priority on increasing bandwidth regardless of its costs. The Libraries will support the in-building infrastructure (potentially including wireless) necessary to enable users to bring in and connect their own computer devices. The infrastructure will be necessary to support the basic goal of serving all members of the KU community (and of serving, to as great an extent as possible, all of Kansas and beyond) by providing access to as many library resources as possible from anywhere (within and outside of the Libraries). This infrastructure is also fundamental to the Edwards Campus' distance learning initiatives.

- a) Build instructional space with an infrastructure for the means of accessing all resources capable of being networked. Additionally, provide the appropriate equipment, e.g., data projectors, computers, audio-visual equipment, etc., for supporting the information commons.
- b) Advocate that the University place the highest priority on increasing campus network bandwidth.
- c) Support and improve the technical infrastructure needs that will facilitate the interlibrary loan and document delivery process, which grows evermore important as the Libraries' purchasing power declines.



## Strategic Direction #2: Develop the Information Commons

One manifestation of the vision is the

**Information Commons**, the physical spaces within the Libraries where instructional, group, and individual learning endeavors can take place. This space should be equipped with the necessary infrastructure and equipment needed to provide for a wide range of learning opportunities with the goal of providing access to information in any format owned or accessed by the Libraries.

The concept of an information commons has gained national attention within the research library community. A forum of leaders among the Association of Research Libraries outlined the concept in a document called the Keystone Principles (1999), one of which is: “The academic library is the intellectual commons for the community where people and ideas interact in both the real and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.”

<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/207/keystone.html>.

Strategies for developing the information commons at KU include:

- a) Seek funding and continue planning for the Book and Archival Record Depository (BARD). This is the Libraries’ overall top priority. The Kansas Board of Regents guidelines indicate a total space deficit of over 170,000 net assignable square feet in the Libraries in the year 2000. This deficit is almost equally divided between user space and collection space, and is larger than the entire space in Watson Library. Collections grow at an estimated rate of approximately 75,000 volumes, or 1.7 miles of shelving per year; by the year 2004 the existing shelving will reach close to 100% capacity. The scarcity of prime building sites and limitations on capital construction funding require new solutions to the historical problem of housing library collections and accommodating readers. As other universities face this same shortage of library space and the associated high construction costs, many of the largest are adopting the model of off-campus shelving facilities. The main benefit of these facilities is financial. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “the cost of building and operating the non-frills warehouse is as little as one-fifteenth of that of a traditional library, even considering the expense of delivering the materials.”

The BARD will:

- Permit library space on the central campus to be better used for teaching, research, and study-related activities.
  - Provide space for an initial collection of 1.5-1.8 million volumes with expansion options; an environmentally stable building capable of preserving “at risk” collections; and improved usability of collections in central campus libraries by relieving crowded conditions.
- b) Develop a plan for what to do until a BARD is built or in the absence of a BARD if funding cannot be identified.
    - Promote campus building projects that will add or upgrade space to existing library facilities, for example, renovations of or additions to buildings.

## **Strategic Direction #2: Develop the Information Commons (continued)**

- Maximize use of collection storage space in all library facilities by installing compact shelving where appropriate and by other means.
- c) Create more space for instruction, group study, and student support services in all library facilities. Demand for instructional space at the present time exceeds current levels of availability.
- d) Provide additional and sufficient library staff to support the work of the Facilities Officer for planning, maintaining and managing library space. Progress on many of the actions suggested in the report could be made more expeditiously with additional staff involved in the design and implementation of solutions.

## **Strategic Direction #3: Develop the Information Portal**

Another manifestation of the vision is the

**Information Portal**, a web-based infrastructure that provides a seamless way of navigating a complex, wide-ranging information universe. It provides: a gateway uniquely designed for the University community to search library, university, and web information resources of scholarly and research value; capabilities for interactive communication with colleagues and classes; and personalized views of key information resources.

The concept of an information portal has been outlined in numerous articles published in library and higher education literature, among them:

- Gleason, Bernard W. "Boston College University-wide Information Portal"  
<http://www.mis2.udel.edu/ja-sig/whitepaper.html>
- Campbell, Jerry D. "The Case for Creating a Scholars Portal to the Web: A White Paper"  
*ARL Bimonthly Report*, 211 <http://www.arl.org/newsltr/211/portal.html>

The concept of an information portal as envisioned for KU has been explained as follows:

The University of Kansas Libraries will continue to acquire and support print-based collections. At the same time, it also must continue to explore methods and means of acquiring and accessing the growing wealth of digital information. The demand for library services and instruction will only grow, as the user community becomes more aware of the vast realm of electronic resources. Increasingly, libraries nationwide are looking for a framework to facilitate digital content management. Such a framework can be found in an information portal.

For the Libraries to develop an information portal, close collaboration with Information Technology and others at a University-wide level will be required. The information portal for the Libraries will provide users with a gateway to access high-quality content and tools needed for information discovery and research purposes. The portal will support a single log-on authentication and authorization process and provide for the capability of individual customization. The portal should provide a one-stop site where library users can access materials owned by the Libraries and also other selected resources. It should

### **Strategic Direction #3: Develop the Information Portal** (continued)

support the growing demands of distance education initiatives; in fact, the needs of distance education are some of the strongest driving factors for remote access to electronic resources. The point of entry should be serviceable and attractive such that it would be a natural and preferred choice of entry for accessing disparate sources of information.

Strategies for developing the information portal at KU include:

- a) Create a plan for what the portal will include (or provide links to) and exclude in a very broad sense. In developing this portal plan, partner with Information Technology and others in planning, defining and developing the portal architecture and other technological issues.
- b) Expand the Libraries' web page development team to provide sufficient staff resources necessary to develop and maintain the Libraries' web pages (both external and internal) consistent with the new information portal design.
- c) Provide a search structure to facilitate information retrieval, with a simple overall structure that allows the use of complex searching configurations as needed. Investigate options that would support this possibility, e.g., hooks to holdings; Endeavor's digital library architecture (ENCompass) and other alternatives. Investigate the role of the online catalog as a primary gateway for accessing selected web resources in addition to traditional resources held by the Libraries.

(January 10, 2001)